

Regional Meeting Report #7

Virginia State Preparedness Report (SPR) Project Regional Meeting, Region I Eanes Pittman Training Center Chesterfield County, VA; Dec 7, 2007

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Period: Dec 7, 2007
Project: A702-025

Purpose: The following information is presented in bullet format, by breakout group, without supporting comments and recommendations. The purpose of this report is to provide the program managers with a snapshot of the regions' current accomplishments and capabilities and the recommended targets and initiatives for the future.

The comments are presented without attribution to a particular agency or individual.

Enhance Regional Collaboration:

Accomplishments and Capabilities:

- Within the region, we are talking more – conducting regional drills – don't operate in a vacuum.
- The tri-city region is doing exercises (Colonial Heights, Petersburg, Hopewell).
- Locality is working an exercise.
- MMRS (Metropolitan Medical Response System) project – largest one done.
- Metro Richmond area – Hands on training and policy writing. Will begin regional training now.
- VCU new training – six (6) week program. Focus is on regionalization.
- City of Richmond established an Evacuation Plan for evacuees from the Tidewater area. Have the use of UASI funding. Radio System established out of this (Radio Broadcast).
- Tidewater and Richmond City – helping with housing, parking and evacuation.
- Actual plan for Tidewater area – Regional Shelter Plan.
- Have regional cache of radios (100 radios).
- Rebanding of radios is being done now.
- Created regional HAZMAT Team – can handle 90% of problems on their own (Crater area).
- Established a regional accountability system for logistics.
- Port Police have funded high dollar equipment for monitoring.
- VA Tech Residential Association – Is a priority list for tools and dispatch.
- Hanover – Involved in the CERT Program. Teaching programming.
- Training in Henrico. Everyone is invited.
- Cross locality training is ongoing.
- Opened NIMS classes to the state.

- NIMS College developed by the Fire Department – fifty (50) hour sessions – provides opportunity to learn what you do with NIMS (for first responders and industry). Trying to get more of the private sector involved.
- Airport Commission Group – Is more work with them with colleges and universities.
- VCU pager and alarm technology.
- GIS tracking.
- Local level – school systems seen as separate entity.
- Hopewell, Petersburg, Colonial Heights – last eighteen (18) months to two (2) years – have seen dividing line at Chesterfield because of the metro area spurt. Seen willingness to add “little guys” into resources. Three counties don’t have the expertise. Thinks VDEM had a lot to do with this.
- The interoperability of HAZMAT Team is the most well developed in the county (Regional).
- Regional HRTT.
- SMA and EMAC are in place.
- Reverse 911 implemented.
- Hopewell – regional HAZMAT established because of Grants.
- Nine (9) to twelve (12) incidents can be taken care of without having to contact another region for help.

Targets for 2010 and Initiatives:

- Need to access where resources are located.
- There is a need for money and equipment.
- Smaller towns in counties need to be taken care of.
- Need better communication top to bottom.
- New Kent County – Always written off in interoperability. Aren’t in the Richmond Grant. No communication, but work well together. Knows they can get assistance. Need more communication.
- Regional planning.
- Medical groups would like to see MRC (Medical Reserve Corps).
- Regional races are very successful – Event coordination.
- Seeing more of higher ups (decision makers) involved in meetings.
- Mobile command has limited availabilities – regional use.
- Need to be able to speak with other EOC’s.
- Want to connect to other EOC’s (Web EOC). When the Grant goes away, who will maintain the system?
- Need microwave technology.
- Need a backup in case Web EOC goes down.
- Need total interoperability. “True”.
- More regional cert – Regional Citizen Corps.
- Sustain and maintain funds.
- Form individual working groups.
- Increase partnering.
- Fund rural localities (all inclusive).
- Need resources for a longer term.

- Enhance SMA.
- Better citizen notification (Regional Citizen Alert).
- Resource list. (Resource Typing).

Enhance Communication Capabilities:

Accomplishments and Capabilities:

- Communications is currently through voice locally, not state or regionally.
- Police and fire can communicate through voice/dispatcher locally but not with neighboring jurisdictions.
- Hanover County Police, Fire, and utilities communicate through 800 megahertz.
- Starz console allows communication within counties.
- Citizen communication is through the AM broadcast station.
- Reverse 911 to be implemented (Grant process).
- News media.
- Text messaging (colleges and universities).
- Chesterfield County public information awareness twenty four (24) hours a day.
- AM radio broadcast frequency.
- E-mail.
- Coast Guard uses digital system.
- Police to police data system used to communicate with other localities – P2P (Police to Police).
- “Public Safety only” wireless network being developed currently.
- Technology is obsolete in six (6) months, but ongoing.
- Constance McGeorge – Manager of Interoperability Coordinators Office of Virginia located in the Office of Commonwealth Preparedness.

Targets for 2010 and Initiatives:

- Need clearer mandate at the state level for regions.
- Need state benchmarks/standards set.
- Need SIRS capability.
- Need Starz capability.
- Need good statewide lead on SIRS/Starz capability.
- Need funding.
- Interact with other agencies and review what works for them.
- Use own frequency or piggyback off of someone else’s frequency.
- Need state Interoperability Plan in place, but it does not mandate.
- Need wireless Mesh Network.
- Need data network that could be converted to voice – easy to contain within universities and colleges.
- Upkeep for communication operations needs to be in place.
- Need for State Interoperation Plan for communications.
- Needs for citizen notification include Reverse 911, siren blast, Stargazer, ham radios, network (police to police) – www.P2P.com, 4.2 wireless Mesh Network and Silent Partner.
- Regions need to be determined once sub regions have been defined.
- Operability first before Inter/Intraoperability.

- Need sub regional/regional readiness evaluation.
- MOU's needed.
- Need more active role of interoperability coordinator's office (most are not aware of this office, ex. universities). This is the first group to mention this office.
- Provide list service group of offices (VDEM, VDOT, DHS, ICO, etc.).
- Streamline the number of state agencies.
- Staffing needed/Administrative Assistant.
- Information clearinghouse needed (website etc.), so that all agencies can check on what is occurring elsewhere. This could include where, what, how and who to contact. Most importantly, this information could include a synopsis of what is hoped to be accomplished by the various projects undertaken throughout the state.
- Funding and Grants process are issues that need to be addressed.

Enhance CBRNE Detection, Response, and Decontamination:

Accomplishments and Capabilities:

- Improved collaboration across the board between agencies and disciplines.
- CTCI development (?)
- Enhanced detection capabilities.
- Virginia has access to Federal resources.
- Additional HAZMAT Teams have been developed outside the regional system.
- VA has the second largest explosive ordnance (bomb) disposal system in the world.
- The VDH has two mobile radiological response labs in this region.
- There is improved coordination with VDH for biological incidents – can provide legally defensible sample kits.

Targets for 2010

- Sustain funding for CBRNE/HAZMAT programs.
- Enhance radiological capabilities – need equipment, training, and protocols.
- Improve chemical and biological detection capabilities – advanced detection, and networked detection systems.
- Establish a new training site for CBRNE/HAZMAT training, open to all state teams, with increased student load and more classes.

Initiatives/Steps

- Identify and develop a training site for HAZMAT training – partner with the state to select a central location that will support the state's and regions' requirements.
- Conduct a state-wide assessment of HAZMAT capabilities, equipment, materials, and needs – the current assessment is 20 years old.
- The current state-wide HAZMAT response is sufficient with regional teams but training must be improved for awareness operations, technicians, and changes/updates for NFPA 472.
- VSP – enhance large vehicle-borne IED detection and response capability.
- VSP – develop explosive entry capability for hostage situations – need seven trailers across the state (regional VSP district locations)

Enhance Planning and COOP:

Accomplishments and Capabilities:

- All have Emergency Operations Plans (EOPs).
- All have been trained on NIMS and are using it.
- Chesterfield has a COOP Plan.
- All have Mitigation Plans.
- An all hazards Mitigation Plan has been completed for the Crater and Capitol planning districts.
- Web EOC is in place.
- Some are using satellite communication to State EOC.
- All have LEPC.
- Some jurisdictions have 800 MHz.
- All use plain language to communicate.
- All have MOU's and some have automatic mutual aid agreements.
- All use EMAC.
- All participate in JTTF.
- All have Sheltering Plans in place which include special needs and pets.
- Some have Reverse 911.
- Chesterfield/Hanover has a public alert system using the AM band for radios.

Objectives/Targets for 2010

- All are working on revising their EOPs.
- Develop and implement guidelines for MOUs in the private sector.
- Secure funding and resources to enhance NIMS training.
- Develop training matrix for unified command among jurisdictions.
- Secure funding for multi agency/multi jurisdictional training to include table top and functional exercises.
- Develop citizens awareness alert notification system.
- Secure funding and staffing plan for CERT.
- Improve communication with the military to determine capabilities.
- Develop planning groups and table top exercises to include military (ex. Determine Promise 04).
- Develop a centralized consolidated grant management system.
- Identifying funding for long term operations dealing with emergency response.

Initiatives/Steps

- Develop and prioritize an agenda to address the objectives/targets listed above.
- Secure funding and resources to support the objectives/targets listed above.
- Work with the military in scenarios and exercises to enhance capabilities and support.

Evacuation, Shelter-in-Place, and Mass Care (Shelter and Feeding):

Accomplishments and Capabilities:

Question: Since 2002 what to you feel has been accomplished in your region related to preparing citizens for staying in place during an emergency and to provide shelter, food, or others services for those who must evacuate their home?

- Have updated Evacuation Plan biannually.
- Emergency Operations Centers exercise and train twice a year.
- Prince George County has increased the number of county employees required to be trained in shelter-in-place.
- Hanover County has increased lines of communication with the state for evacuation.
- American Red Cross has quarterly meetings to discuss shelter-in-place, mass care, etc. All stakeholders have been invited to deal with emergencies.
- Public Information Officers educate the media about emergencies
- Chesterfield Police Department have identified schools as evacuation centers and infrastructures needed to support.
- Chesterfield Police Department have exercises and conducted tabletops annually and identified points of contact during exercises.
- Chesterfield Police Department has updated emergency plans annually as mandated by the state.
- Hanover's interoperability has improved within the region .
- Region is working on pet placement during evacuation and shelter-in-place.
- Region has increased the number of generators and maintenance.
- Region has MOU's with fuel companies.
- Chesterfield PD has adopted a Pet Sheltering Plan.
- Chesterfield PD have purchased tivak suits and PPE's.
- Regional Hazmat Teams have been formed.
- More equipped with mass care and emergency preparedness.
- Reverse 911, AM radio, website and quarterly newsletter are distributed and have been created for citizens.
- Hanover has created website for emergency volunteers.
- Personal emergency preparedness contracts with private agencies for mass care, evacuation and shelter-in-place.
- Alarm testing in Hopewell for evacuations.
- Increased partnerships with jails, private organizations, and labor unions to provide food, equipment, and shelters. These increased partnerships have also provided more volunteers.

Question: What objectives should be established to further citizen evacuation planning and readiness across your region by 2010?

- Identify special needs population, including disabled, displaced children and elderly.
- Prince George County has adopted Reverse 911 system.
- Continue strengthening regional collaboration.

Question: What steps need to be taken to accomplish each objective?

- Identify special needs populations, including disabled, displaced children and elderly.

Make it easier to identify special needs. Better lines of communication and ways to communicate with other agencies.

Utilize already existing information by modifying laws.

Modify existing laws to release information.

- Collaborate with universities, senior citizens, libraries, community response teams, schools, and vocation rehab for evacuation, mass care and shelter in place
- Adopt Reverse 911.
- Applied for grants and gain regional support.
- Continue strengthening regional collaboration.
- Increase regional exercises biannually.
- Have local board of political leaders form panels to guide and align emergency management to discuss finances and programs.
- Continue educating community.
- Develop better relationship with the media to educate community about evacuation, shelter-in-place and mass care.

Initiatives and Issues

- No regional mass care plan.
- Evacuation routes are insufficient for evacuation.
- Spillover effect has not been discussed or planned for.
- Region is not prepared to handle large number of evacuees from Hampton Roads.
- Surveys for special needs citizens are difficult. Data collected in 2004 is insufficient and outdated.
- No increase in personnel.
- 2010 not achievable for target dates.

Critical Resource Logistics and Distribution:

Accomplishments and Capabilities:

- Currently have a wide disparity across this region in logistical preparedness – emergency management staffing, planning, and funding.
- One senior leader seminar (SLS) on emergency preparedness has been completed.
- Point of Distribution (POD) locations have been identified in the region.
- Plans and procedures for POD operations, both logistics and pharmaceutical, have been prepared and exercised.
- POD locations for mass inoculations have been identified – drive through service envisioned and tested.
- Regional jurisdiction EOCs have trained with the VEOC.
- Some EOCs have and are using WebEOC for collaboration and tracking.
- Currently have no stockpiles of disaster supplies in the region.
- Currently have no citizen groups involved in logistical distribution plans.
- Churches/faith-based groups are being trained to assist in emergency situations.
- Contracts in place for critical services – debris removal for post disaster recovery.

Targets for 2010

- Enhance the region's capabilities with more full time emergency planners and logisticians.
- Identify needs region-wide and establish a base line for additional critical resources and services.
- Establish regional warehouses for receipt, storage, and distribution of disaster

- supplies and equipment and begin to stock specific items.
- Develop security requirements for the warehouses and PODs and consider adding private security firms to the on-call security lists.
- Identify PODs in the region just for water and ice.
- Involve the private sector and more citizen groups in planning and training for logistics distribution and shelter operations.
- Identify and apply for available grants to improve the region's capabilities.

Initiatives/Steps

- Develop local outreach programs for education and training of our region's citizens on preparedness issues.
- Justify and include additional emergency management staffing requirements in the SPR submission.
- Develop a region-wide base line for critical disaster resources and services.
- Invite and encourage private sector and citizen groups' participation in region and local exercises.
- Encourage law enforcement agencies (VSP, local police departments, and sheriffs' offices) to consider using volunteers from private security firms to help provide 24/7 POD security during emergencies.